

Citizens Informational Workshop

Winston-Salem Northern Beltway Western Section Reevaluation



Transportation Improvement Program
Project No. R-2247

November 27, 2001

Welcome! Thank you for coming to tonight's workshop. This handout provides a summary of the project and a guide to the project maps and information on display.

PLEASE....

SIGN in

You will automatically be included on the project mailing list.

VIEW the slideshow

This 8-minute slideshow provides a summary of the project history and the purpose of tonight's workshop.

READ this handout

This handout contains information on how the alternatives were developed.

REVIEW the project displays

A key in the back of this handout will help you locate your area of interest.

TALK with NCDOT representatives

They are available to answer your questions.

TELL us what you think

Your input counts! Please remember to fill out a comment sheet.

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Preferred Alternative was approved, and final engineering designs for the Western Section of the Northern Beltway were presented for comment at a Design Public Hearing in 1996. Right of way acquisition for the Northern Beltway also began in 1996.

In 1999, a lawsuit was brought against the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the NCDOT because of alleged deficiencies in the FEIS. As a result, right of way acquisition and construction were stopped, and a reevaluation process for the FEIS began.

As part of the reevaluation, the NCDOT developed two new alternatives that were not included in the FEIS; Alternatives RV-A and RV-B. These alternatives would widen existing roadways instead of building a freeway on new location. Currently, Alternatives RV-A and RV-B are not proposed projects. The NCDOT is only evaluating whether they should continue to be studied.

Other alternatives that were included in the FEIS that are being reviewed and updated, in coordination with the local Metropolitan Planning Organization, during this reevaluation process are: Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Alternatives, Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternatives, and mass transit alternatives.

These alternatives are not presented at this workshop tonight. However, updated research and discussions of these types of alternatives will be included in the documentation of the reevaluation.

TDM alternatives involve measures that seek to alter traveler behavior to reduce travel demand. TDM measures can include carpooling, flex-time,

Background

In the early 1990's, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) evaluated several options for improving north/south access in western Forsyth County. Among these options were eight corridors for a multi-lane freeway on new location from US 158 north to US 52. It was one of these new location corridors that was selected as the Preferred Alternative. This corridor is known as the Western Section of the Winston-Salem Northern Beltway.

telecommuting, and parking restrictions. TSM alternatives involve minor improvements to increase traffic flow. These types of improvements include intersection improvements, traffic signal coordination, and intelligent transportation system features such as message boards and video cameras to manage incidents. Because TDM and TSM alternatives do not involve construction of major capital improvements, they typically do not generate substantial direct environmental impacts.

What Are Alternatives RV-A and RV-B?

Alternatives RV-A and RV-B would widen existing roadways in western Forsyth County instead of building the Western Section of the Northern Beltway.

Most of the roadways included in Alternatives RV-A and RV-B are two-lane roadways. Under either alternative, the two-lane roads would be widened to four lanes with grass medians and 200 feet of right of way. A typical cross-section for a four-lane roadway is shown in the back of this handout.

Where needed, other improvements in addition to widening would be part of the alternatives. For example, sharp curves would be straightened, steep grades flattened, and some intersections would be realigned.

The NCDOT project team considered several factors when selecting which side of the road to widen on. These factors included design constraints and minimizing impacts to residences, businesses, and community facilities.

Alternative RV-A includes widening existing roadways selected to provide improved north/south access in western Forsyth County. Alternative RV-A is shown in red on the map in the back of this handout.

Alternative RV-A is approximately 22 miles long and includes portions of twelve roads:

- Lewisville-Clemmons Road
- Styers Ferry Road
- Country Club Road
- Meadowlark Road

- Olivet Church Road
- Spicewood Drive
- Grandview Club Road
- Reynolda Road
- Robinhood Road
- Shattalon Drive
- Murray Road
- Bethania-Rural Hall Road

Alternative RV-B includes those roadway segments that were projected to experience reduced traffic volumes with the Western Section of the Northern Beltway in place. Alternative RV-B is shown in blue on the map in the back of this handout.

Alternative RV-B is approximately 27 miles long and includes portions of seven roads:

- Silas Creek Parkway
- Shattalon Drive
- Reynolda Road
- Polo Road
- Peace Haven Road
- Olivet Church Road
- Meadowlark Drive

Silas Creek Parkway, included in RV-B, is currently four lanes wide. It would be widened to six lanes by constructing an additional lane in each direction to the outside of the existing lanes. Portions of Reynolda Road and Lewisville-Clemmons Road also are currently multi-lane. These road segments would have a 16-foot raised median with turn bays. Typical cross-sections for Silas Creek Parkway and Reynolda Road and Lewisville-Clemmons Road are shown in the back of this handout.

How Do I Review The Project Displays?

Alternatives RV-A and RV-B are shown on the large aerial photographs on display tonight. The aerial photographs are organized by roadway. Above each display is a sign listing the roadway shown. A key map showing the alternatives and how they are labeled on the displays is included in the back of this handout. Please ask an NCDOT representative if you have any questions or need assistance.

How Were The Alternatives Developed?

First, NCDOT examined the transportation problems that the Western Section of the Northern Beltway was intended to solve, which are:

- Projected congestion on existing roadways in western Forsyth County;
- An existing radial-dominated road network that does not provide for easy north/south travel;
- Poor linkage among area roadways that results in circuitous travel around the region and poor access to employment, shopping, and other services outside of western Forsyth County.

Second, NCDOT examined the benefits of the Preferred Alternative, which include:

- Improved north/south connectivity in western Forsyth County;
- Congestion relief for area roadways;
- Improved high-speed direct regional connections to US 52, US 421, and I-40;
- Increased average travel speeds and decreased vehicle hours traveled.

Alternatives RV-A and RV-B focused on those benefits of the Preferred Alternative that could be addressed by widening existing roadways. These are, 1) improved north/south connectivity in western Forsyth County, and 2) congestion relief for area roadways.

Alternatives RV-A and RV-B would not provide high speed direct access to US 52, US 421 or I-40, and traffic would still travel through signalized and unsignalized intersections, which would limit any overall improvements to travel times and speeds in the area.

As described previously, Alternative RV-A focused primarily on the first benefit and includes widening those existing roadways that best serve the north-south mobility needs in the project area.

Alternative RV-B focused primarily on the second benefit and includes widening those roadway segments that were most benefited, that is, they experienced the greatest traffic reduction, with the Preferred Alternative in place.

The traffic projections used to develop Alternatives RV-A and RV-B are based on a new regional travel demand model completed in 1999. The model was used with two different future land use scenarios – a “Trend” model which predicts 2025 traffic volumes based on current growth trends and a “Draft” model that predicts 2025 traffic volumes based on the Legacy Plan, the land use plan currently under review by Forsyth County and its municipalities.

What Are The Impacts Of Alternatives RV-A and RV-B?

The estimated environmental impacts associated with Alternatives RV-A and RV-B are summarized in the table below. For comparison, the impacts of the Preferred Alternative for the Western Section of the Northern Beltway are also listed.

The table includes those issues that could be estimated using basic functional engineering designs on aerial photography.

Table 1. Impacts of Alternatives

	Alternative RV-A	Alternative RV-B	Preferred Alternative
Length	22 miles	27 miles	17 miles
Residential Relocations	417	645	289
Business Relocations	35	37	10
School Relocations	1	1	0
Church Relocations	1	1	0
Parks/ Recreational Areas	0	0	0
Major Stream Crossings	6	12	16

If RV-A or RV-B are retained for further study, a wide range of additional issues, such as noise, air quality, costs, secondary growth, land use, community cohesion, and other topics normally included in an environmental impact statement would need to be addressed in greater detail.

What Happens Next?

Alternatives RV-A and RV-B are being evaluated as potential replacements to constructing the Western Section of the Northern Beltway. Neither RV-A nor RV-B are proposed projects at this time.

The NCDOT will consider the following to determine whether studies should continue on RV-A or RV-B:

- Your input;
- Impacts and costs of Alternatives RV-A and RV-B compared to the Preferred Alternative for the Western Section of the Northern Beltway;
- Effectiveness of Alternatives RV-A and RV-B compared to the Preferred Alternative for the Western Section of the Northern Beltway.

If either or both Alternatives RV-A and RV-B are determined, based on public input and impacts known to date, to be reasonable alternatives to the Northern Beltway, the NCDOT will need to prepare more detailed environmental studies and engineering designs.

A recent outcome of the lawsuit is the decision to combine into one environmental document the assessment of the Western Section of the Northern Beltway with the studies being conducted for the Eastern Section of the Northern Beltway and the Eastern Section Extension.

It is not known at this time exactly what format this combined environmental document will take or what the schedule for its completion will be. The NCDOT will continue to publish newsletters and hold citizens informational workshops and public hearings as necessary to keep the public apprised of the status of the projects.

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How Will I Be Notified About NCDOT'S Decision?

Everyone on the mailing list will receive a newsletter describing the results of the NCDOT's studies and announcing NCDOT's decisions regarding how the project will proceed.

Future workshops and hearings will be announced in newsletters as well as in newspaper advertisements.

Further Information

Should you have any questions or require additional information after this meeting, please contact:

Ms. Missy Dickens, PE, Project Manager
North Carolina Dept. of Transportation
1548 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1548

Phone: (919) 733-7844
Fax: (919) 733-9794
Email: (919) mdickens@dot.state.nc.us

Or:

Ms. Jill Gurak, PE, Project Manager
PBS&J
3214 Spring Forest Rd
Raleigh, NC 27616

Phone: (919) 876-6888
Fax: (919) 876-6848
Email: (919) jsgurak@pbsj.com